

Response to Intervention

Early Intervening
and
Responsiveness
to
Intervention

A Primer for Parents
August 2007



Conclusion

This primer has been a brief introduction to the new process of early intervening and response to intervention and response to intervention. Don't be overwhelmed; this is new for educators as well.

If you have further questions, ask your school principal for additional information or call **South Dakota Department of Education** at **605-773-3678**.

Remember, early intervening and RtI are good for your child of your child. Every child receives assistance at one or more levels. It encourages a proactive rather than reactive approach to solving academic and behavioral problems.

Introduction

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was revised and updated. IDEA is the federal law that defines and explains special education in this country.

There are two emerging issues in the law that you might hear at IEP meetings and in your conversations with school staff: Early Intervening and Responsiveness to Intervention.

The focus for this primer is to explain Responsiveness to Intervention (RtI) and Early Intervening Services as they pertain to parents and children who are "at risk" for academic and behavioral problems.

This brochure explains these important changes to special education law and how parents should be involved in each process. Certain aspects of each issue are defined and explained in current law and regulations while other parts are still vague.

What are Early Intervening Services?

One major change in the law is the emphasis on early intervening services for children who are at risk for academic and/or behavioral problems. The idea is to intervene early with evidence-based strategies before a child fails and becomes so far behind that they require special education.

How are early intervening and RtI related?

The idea is to intervene early when a student shows signs of academic and/or behavioral problems. RtI is a framework or process schools use to deliver these services.

What is Responsiveness to Intervention (RtI)?

Responsiveness to intervention is based on the concept of providing evidence-based instructional and behavioral strategies by highly qualified staff that is matched to student needs and monitored on a frequent basis. The information gathered by this approach is used to make decisions regarding the student's educational program.

What is my involvement in Tier 3?

If attempts are unsuccessful in Tiers 1 or 2, it is sometimes necessary to make a referral for an assessment. This assessment will determine if your child has a disability and needs special education- specially designed instruction for an eligible student. This is a very formal process, and parent involvement issues have been well defined. Parent involvement includes, but not limited to, these activities:

- Your consent is required for the school to evaluate or implement special services.
- The school must notify you if they propose to change or not change your child's eligibility, services, or placement.
- Actively participate in all Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.
- The special education Parents Rights brochure will explain your involvement and rights in special education.

What is my involvement in Tier 2?

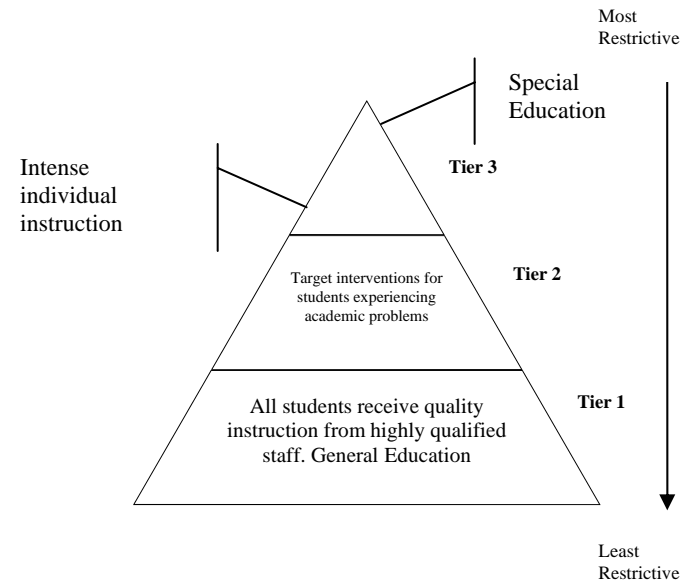
If your child is struggling academically or behaviorally, it might be necessary for the school to implement targeted academic and/or behavioral interventions. In many cases, this will be enough to get your child “back on track”. Your involvement could include the following:

- Make a referral for your child to the Problem Solving Team (this process might be called something different in your school).
- Ask the school to notify you of team meetings and progress on the intervention.
- If necessary, attend team meetings.
- Suggest interventions and strategies.
- If necessary, implement and reinforce strategies at home.

Reinforce your child as he/she improves.

What is the RtI Process?

Most RtI systems are divided into a three-tier intervention model as illustrated below:



The three-tier process is analogous to the medical model. We might start with practicing good health with rest, exercise, and a proper diet (Tier 1). At times, we might need a physical exam and special medical interventions (Tier 2). Finally, some of us might need individualized treatment, therapy, or surgery (Tier 3)

What are the goals of early intervention and RtI?

- Prevent unnecessary academic failure.
- Implement evidence-based intervention for all students.
- Prevent unnecessary referral to special education.
- Use prevention rather than reaction to student difficulties.
- Increased parent involvement at all three tiers.
- Encourage teachers to use evidence-based strategies.

Is RtI the same in all schools?

No, RtI might be implemented in different ways depending on the school. Tier 1 is usually the same- good instruction by qualified staff. Tier 3 is defined by team most schools as special education, so there will be similarities from one school to another. Tier 2 can be different depending on the school. Tier 2 usually involves a team of school staff who work together using a problem-solving method. The team helps define in measurable terms the students problems, suggests evidence-based interventions, and monitors the progress of these interventions.

What are some of the names for Tier 2?

- Child Study Team
- Teacher Assistance Team
- Schoolwide Support Team
- Early Intervening Team
- Step 1
- School Assistive Team
- Schoolwide Assistance Team

What is my involvement in Tier 1?

Remember, Tier 1 is the general education classroom with good instruction and qualified staff. Parents are involved in the following ways:

- Frequently communicate with the teacher.
- Attend school functions, such as back to school night and parent-teacher conferences.
- Ask your child about their school day.
- Monitor and assist with homework assignments.
- Support and reinforce the classroom teacher.
- Meet with the teacher if your child starts to experience difficulties.
- Praise your child for good work and discuss issues that are problems.